Where in Japan Are You Now?

Learn how to ask where someone is

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Also Appears In: Conversational Japanese for Absolute Beginners | Throwback Thursday | Absolute Beginner Season 2

Dialogue - Japanese

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Kanji | English | Rōmaji | All

A: もしもし？

B: テイラーさん！すみません。

A: だいじょうぶです。

B: いま、どこにいますか。

A: いま、ぼくと もえと サラは マクドナルドに います。

B: マクドナルド？

Vocabulary

hide

English | Kana | Rōmaji

どこ [どこ]
where
7 EXAMPLES

リーさん、出身はどこですか。
Mr. Lee, where are you from?
リーさん、しゅっしんはどこですか。

どこにありますか
where is there
どこにありますか

バス停はどこにありますか。
Where is the bus stop?
バスていはどこにありますか。

出身はどこですか。
Where are you from?
しゅっしんはどこですか。

出身はどこですか。
Where is your hometown?
しゅっしんはどこですか。

トイレはどこですか。
Where is the bathroom?
トイレはどこですか。

ここはどこですか。
Where are we? (Literally: Where is here?)

います [います]
to exist, to have(animate),V2, -masu form
1 EXAMPLE

いもうとがいます。
I have a younger sister.

もしもし [もしもし]
Hello (on the telephone)
1 EXAMPLE

もしもし、かおりさん？
Hello, Kaori? (on the telephone)

だいじょうぶ [だいじょうぶ]
No problem, all right, don't worry, it's fine
1 EXAMPLE

だいじょうぶ？
Are you all right? (informal)

に [に]
place marking particle, meaning "in"
1 EXAMPLE

まさとさんは とうきょうに います。
Masato is in Tokyo.

いま [いま]
now
1 EXAMPLE

いま、なんじですか。
What time is it now?

だいじょうぶです [だいじょうぶです]
I'm OK., I'll be fine.
1 EXAMPLE

だいじょうぶです。
I'm fine.

マクドナルド [マクドナルド]
McDonald's (restaurant)
1 EXAMPLE

マクドナルドにいます。
I'm going to McDonald's.

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Lesson Notes

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Lesson Focus

The Focus of This Lesson Is Asking and Saying Where Someone Is.
いま、どこに いますか。
Ima, doko ni imasu ka.
"Where are you now?"

In the previous lessons, you learned how to use arimasu for talking about things.
In this lesson, you'll learn how to use the conjugated verb imasu for talking about people and animals as well as to use the question word doko to ask someone where is.

"Where Are You?" "I Am at [Place]."

To say where you are, all you have to do is say watashi wa ("as for me"). If you're talking about someone else, then replace watashi with that person's name.
Then add the name of the place, plus the place marker ni.
Finally you add imasu, which is the equivalent of arimasu ("exist") for animate objects (people and animals).

* Keep in mind that when you're answering the question, "Where is [name]?/Where are you, [name]? " you can leave out the watashi wa/[name] wa part, as it's understood from the context.

Formation

Watashi wa [place] ni imasu → "I am at [place]."

To make this into a question and ask "Where are you? " simply replace watashi ("I") with the name of the person you're asking about. Remember, in Japanese we hardly ever use the word for "you," anata. This means that the question can mean both "Where are you, [name]?" and "Where is [name]?" You have to rely on the context to understand which it is.
Then replace [place] with the word for "where," doko.
And finally, as you know, when asking a question, you need the Japanese equivalent of the question mark at the end of the sentence, ka.

Formation

[Person's name] *wa doko ni imasu ka* → "Where are you, [person's name]?"/"Where is [person's name]?"

Sample Sentences

1. A: すずきさんは どこに いますか。
A: Suzuki-san wa doko ni imasu ka.
A: "Where is Mr. Suzuki?" OR "Where are you, Mr. Suzuki?"
B: えきに います。
B: Eki ni imasu.
B: "He's at the station." OR "I'm at the station."
2. A: ねこは どこに いますか。
A: Neko wa doko ni imasu ka.
A: "Where is the cat?"
B: ベッドの うえに います。
B: Beddo no ue ni imasu.
B: "It's on the bed."

A Wa Doko Desu Ka and *A Wa Doko Ni Imasu Ka*: What's the Difference?

Simply put, *A wa doko desu ka* and *A wa doko ni imasu ka* have the same meaning: "Where is A?" When you're talking about a person or animal, either of these ways is fine.

However, **if you are asking where a thing is, you cannot use *A wa doko ni imasu ka***, because **we only use *imasu* for people or animals.**

For Example:

1. ねこは どこです か。
Neko wa doko desu ka.
"Where is the cat?"
2. ねこは どこに います か。
O Neko wa doko ni imasu ka.
"Where is the cat?"
3. ジョンさんは どこです か。
O Jon-san wa doko desu ka.
"Where is Jon?"
4. ジョンさんは どこに います か。
O Jon-san wa doko ni imasu ka.
"Where is Jon?"

1. ペンは どこです か。
O Pen wa doko desu ka.
"Where is the pen?"
Not:
X ペンは どこに います か。

X *Pen wa doko ni imasu ka.*

X "Where is the pen?"

Reference

- *doko* → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 13
- *imasu* → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 20
- *arimasu* → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 19

Key Vocabulary & Phrases

★もしもし (*moshi-moshi*)
This is the greeting you use when you pick up the telephone, like "Hello?" in English. We can only use this greeting on the telephone, so be careful! Sometimes when people are speaking very casually, they drop the second -ō sound, so it becomes *moshi-moshi*)).

★だいじょうぶです (*daijōbu desu*)
If you recall, we studied this in Season 1 Lesson 12. We use it in a huge variety of ways in Japanese. It can mean "I'm fine," "It's okay," "that's all right," "I don't need any," "I'm OK," etc... It's a very useful phrase!

★いま (*ima*)
This means "now," and we can use it just like in English to ask "Where are you now?" except, in Japanese, the "now" goes at the beginning of the question, so it literally becomes "Now, where are you?": *Ima, doko ni imasu ka.* Please see Season 1 Lesson 13 for more explanation.

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Grammar

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Below is a list of the grammar points introduced or used in this lesson. Click for a full explanation.

いる (1) *iru* (1)
to exist (for animate, usually living, things)
Introduced

ある *aru*
to be, to exist (of inanimate things); to have
Used

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